

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OES-03 MC-02

ACDA-05 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ERDA-05 SAI-01

SAM-01 /084 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5032

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

USNMR SHAPE

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 29211

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, GW, NATO, FR

SUBJECT: BOURGES/LEBER MEETING

REF: BONN 17823 DTG31 L534ZOCT75

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: BOURGES/LEBER DISCUSSIONS OCTOBER 27
FOCUSED ON SUBJECT OF ARMAMENT COOPERATION. OTHER
HABITUAL AGENDA ITEMS -- "FORWARD DEFENSE" AND PLUTON --
APPEAR TO HAVE GOTTEN GOOD DEAL LESS ATTENTION. END
SUMMARY.

2. AS A RESULT OF DISCUSSIONS WITH QUAI, MOD AND FRG
EMBASSY SOURCES IN PARIS, WE HAVE PUT TOGETHER FOLLOWING
COMPOSITE PICTURE OF SUBSTANCE DEALT WITH DURING OCTOBER
27 MEETING IN PARIS BETWEEN FRENCH DEFENSE MINISTER
BOURGES AND GERMAN MOD LEBER. VISIT SEEMS TO HAVE
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BROKEN NO NEW GROUND BUT IT DID STRENGTHEN PERSONAL RELA-

TIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO MINISTERS AND GAVE LEBER OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT FRENCH SSBN BASE NEAR BREST IN MORNING BEFORE MOVING TO SUBSTANTIVE TALKS IN THE AFTERNOON.

3. IN PAST MEETINGS, ACCORDING TO SOURCES, THE GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTER HAS FOCUSED SPECIAL ATTENTION ON TWO SUBJECTS: FIRST, GERMAN DESIRES TO SEE FRENCH COMMITTED TO PARTICIPATION IN "FORWARD DEFENSE" OF GERMANY; AND SECOND, GERMAN INTEREST IN FINDING SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO PLUTON PROBLEM, IN TERMS OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY ISSUES POSED FOR FRG AND NATO BY THAT WEAPON SYSTEM. ACCORDING TO OUR MOD SOURCE, GERMAN SIDE DID NOT PRESS THESE SUBJECTS AS MUCH AS IN THE PAST. FRENCH CONCLUDED FROM THIS PARTICULAR MEETING THAT LEBER IS MUCH MORE "REALISTIC" ABOUT FRENCH POLICY ON THESE TWO PARTICULAR ISSUES. OUR SOURCE UNDERLINED THAT FRENCH CONTINGENCY PLANNING WITH NATO HEADQUARTERS DOES NOT FORESEE THE USE OF FRENCH FORCES IN THE DEFENSE OF THE EASTERN EXTREMES OF FRG TERRITORY. MOREOVER, OUR SOURCE CONFIRMED THAT FRENCH POLICY ON STATIONING AND COMMAND OF PLUTON REMAINS UNCHANGED: PLUTON WILL STAY ON FRENCH TERRITORY AND UNDER FRENCH COMMAND.

4. BULK OF BOURGES-LEBER DISCUSSIONS, WE ARE TOLD, FOCUSED ON SERIES OF ARMAMENT QUESTIONS. OUR FRENCH SOURCES TELL US THAT THEY ARE SOMEWHAT CONCERNED BY THE POSSIBLE EVOLUTION OF GERMAN ARMAMENT INDUSTRY WHICH MAY BECOME A MORE ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS EXPORT BUSINESS. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE QUAI TENDS TO VIEW SUCH A POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT WITH LESS CONCERN THAN THE FRENCH MOD, WHICH PERCEIVES THE GROWTH OF A NEW AND POWERFUL COMPETITOR FOR FRENCH ARMS SALES ABROAD. BOURGES SOUGHT CLARIFICATION FROM LEBER ON FUTURE GERMAN ARMS EXPORT POLICIES AND RECEIVED A VAGUE RESPONSE THAT LEFT THE FRENCH UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF GERMAN MILITARY EXPORT POLICY IN COMING YEARS. FRENCH BELIEVE THAT LEBER -- AS REPRESENTATIVE OF RIGHT WING OF SPD PARTY -- IS INCLINED TOWARD A MORE AGGRESSIVE EXPORT POLICY, WHILE THE LEFT WING OF THE SPD IS DECIDEDLY MORE NEGATIVE TOWARD THIS TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT. CONSEQUENTLY,

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FRENCH INTERPRET LEBER'S NONCOMMITAL RESPONSE TO BOURGES' PROBING AS REFLECTION OF UNCERTAINTY WITHIN GERMAN GOVERNMENT OVER WHAT NEW DIRECTIONS (IF ANY) THE FRG SHOULD FAVOR WITH REGARD TO THE EXPORT OF GERMAN ARMS. NEVERTHELESS, OVER THE LONG TERM, MOD IS PERSUADED THAT GERMAN EXPORT OF ARMS "INEVITABLY" WILL EXPAND. BOURGES ALSO DISCUSSED FRANCO-GERMAN EXPORT OF ARMS TO GREECE-TURKEY, TAKING THE LINE THAT FRANCE SHOULD HAVE THE LEAD IN

GREECE AND GERMANY SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN TURKEY.
ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, GERMANS DID NOT TAKE THIS BAIT
AND FRENCH HAVE CONCLUDED THAT FRG WILL PROCEED ONLY
CAUTIOUSLY WITH A PROGRAM OF ARMS EXPORTS TO TURKEY IN
NEAR TERM. QUESTION OF EXPORT OF FRANCO-GERMAN CO-PRO-
DUCED ALPHA-JET WAS ALSO DISCUSSED WITH A VIEW TO OBTAIN-
ING FRG AGREEMENT TO RELEASING FRENCH SALE OF ALPHA-JET
TO EGYPT. ALTHOUGH OUR SOURCES WERE VERY CAUTIOUS IN

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ERDA-05 /084 W

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R 101058Z NOV 75
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
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DESCRIBING THE FRANCO-GERMAN DISCUSSION OF THIS SUBJECT,
WE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT FRENCH DO NOT YET HAVE GREEN
LIGHT FROM GERMANS FOR THIS POTENTIAL DEAL. ON GENERAL
SUBJECT OF STANDARDIZATION, WE UNDERSTAND THAT BOURGES
PROPOSED TO LEBER, AS WE HAD TO UK MOD MASON, THAT NATO

STANDARDIZATION BE THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION AMONG THE QUADRIpartite ARMAMENT DIRECTORS. ACCORDING TO OUR MOD SOURCES, BOURGES CAME AWAY WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT LEBER WAS RECEPTIVE TO THE IDEA OF PURSUING QUADRIpartite MECHANISM, THOUGH NOT AT EXPENSE OF NATO STANDARDIZATION PROGRAM.

5. WITH REGARD TO ROLE FOR ITALY IN MULTILATERAL ARMAMENT COOPERATION (AS DISCUSSED IN PARA 3, REFTel), OUR MOD SOURCE HAS TOLD US ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT FRENCH
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DO NOT BELIEVE ITALY IS A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE GAME, WHETHER WITHIN THE NATO CONTEXT OR A MORE RESTRICTED EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK. THE ITALIAN CONNECTION, HOWEVER, CANNOT BE IGNORED GIVEN THE LARGE MARKET THAT ITALY REPRESENTS AND THE SIGNIFICANT ITALIAN PRODUCTION BASE FOR ARMS. NEVERTHELESS, MOD TENDS TO VIEW ITALIANS AS RELATIVELY UNRELIABLE AND ECONOMICALLY INEFFICIENT MEMBER OF ANY POTENTIAL PROGRAM OF ARMAMENT COOPERATION. APPARENTLY, FRENCH EXPERIENCE CONCERNING ARMS COOPERATION WITH ITALIANS HAS NOT BEEN VERY ENCOURAGING TO PARIS. MOREOVER, SOME MOD SOURCES VIEW ITALIAN ARMS INDUSTRY AS "CREATURE OF U.S. ARMS INDUSTRY," AND CONSEQUENTLY LITTLE MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF U.S. ARMS INTEREST IN EUROPE, WITH ALL THE GAULLIST IMPLICATIONS THAT THIS VIEW CONJURES UP. AS A RESULT OF SUCH CONSIDERATIONS, OUR SOURCES CONCLUDE THAT ITALY CANNOT BE CONSIDERED IN THE SAME LEAGUE AS GERMANY AND GREAT BRITAIN (OR INDEED, AS THE US) IN TERMS OF ARMAMENT COOPERATION.

6. COMMENT: WE SEE BOURGES-LEBER MEETING AS THIRD EFFORT BY BOURGES (AFTER HIS MEETINGS WITH SECDEF AND UK MOD MASON) TO TEST OPTIONS THAT MIGHT BE AVAILABLE TO FRENCH IN TERMS OF MEETING FUTURE MILITARY EQUIPMENT NEEDS THROUGH VARIOUS FORMS OF COOPERATION. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE WITH PRECISION THE FINAL CONCLUSIONS THAT BOURGES MAY HAVE DERIVED FROM THESE MEETINGS, EARLY INDICATIONS SUGGEST THAT THE FRENCH ARE NOT CONFIDENT THAT BILATERAL OPTIONS OFFER ANY MORE POTENTIAL PAYOFF THAN DOES FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN NATO STANDARDIZATION. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, OF COURSE, THIS JUDGMENT DEPENDS CRUCIALLY ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH NATO STANDARDIZATION (OR "EUROPEAN" OPTIONS) WILL MEET THE KEY FRENCH DESIDERATA WHICH WE DESCRIBED IN PARIS 20959 INOTAL): A GENUINE "TWO-WAY" STREET THAT OFFERS THE FRENCH AN EQUITABLE (IN THEIR EYES) "SLICE OF THE PIE," THE CREATION OF A JOINT EUROPEAN ARMAMENTS EFFORT, AND A MORE FRUGAL APPROACH TO ARMS PROCUREMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLIANCE, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, MILITARY PLANS, DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS29211
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750390-0177
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751158/aaaacaiq.tel
Line Count: 223
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BONN 17823
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <28 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BOURGES/LEBER MEETING
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, GE, FR, NATO, (BOURGES, YVON), (LEBER, GEORG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006